Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims below will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the

application.

1. (Currently Amended) A system for receiving and forwarding e-mail messages for a

subscriber, the system comprising:

a server configured to be coupled to a network; and

an agent resident and operable on the server, the agent configured to compare a first

characteristic of the e-mail messages, received for the subscriber, to specific message

characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, to generate a message

ID for an e-mail message that has a characteristic match, to send an alert message to the

subscriber when the characteristic match is found, and to execute instructions for forwarding

the e-mail message that has the characteristic match, wherein the first characteristic is other

than message sender ~~information~~ information, message subject line information, and message

time information, the alert message includes the message ID, and the instructions are

associated with the message ID and are received from the subscriber in response to the alert

message.

2. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 1 wherein the agent is further configured to

send the alert message to a mobile device configured to be carried by the subscriber.

3. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a human interface configured to allow an operator to cause the e-mail message that has the characteristic match to be forwarded to an e-mail address provided by the subscriber responding to the alert message by conversing with the operator via telephone.

4. (Previously Presented) A system as in claim 1 further comprising a telephone menu system configured to allow the subscriber, responding to the alert message, to perform one or more of the following actions: log in, identify the e-mail message that has the characteristic match, select from recorded options, and input information for forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic match.

5. (Currently Amended) An e-mail server comprising:

an e-mail system configured to receive and to forward e-mail messages; and

an agent configured to compare a first characteristic of e-mail messages, received for a subscriber, to specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the e-mail server, to generate a message ID for an e-mail message that has a characteristic match, to send an alert message to the subscriber when the characteristic match is found, and to execute instructions for forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic match, wherein the first characteristic is other than message sender ~~information~~ information, message subject line information, and message time information, the alert message includes the message ID, and the instructions are associated with the message ID and are received from the subscriber in response to the alert message.

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6-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A method for receiving, filtering, and routing e-mail messages, comprising:

   prerecording, on a mail server, characteristics for the e-mail messages to be routed, the characteristics provided by a subscriber;

   receiving, at the mail server, an e-mail message addressed to the subscriber;

   comparing a first characteristic of the received e-mail message to the prerecorded characteristics provided by the subscriber, the first characteristic being other than message sender ~~information~~ information, message subject line information, and message time information;

   identifying and storing, on the mail server, the received e-mail message if a characteristic match is found with one of the prerecorded characteristics;

   generating a message ID for the received e-mail message if the characteristic match is found with the one of the prerecorded characteristics;

   sending an alert message to the subscriber when the characteristic match is found, the alert message including the message ID;

   receiving instructions for forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic match, the instructions being the associated with the message ID and being received from the subscriber in response to the alert message; and

   forwarding the e-mail message that has the characteristic match to a destination according to the instructions provided in response to the alert message.

10-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An agent for processing e-mail messages, comprising:

a stored list of message characteristics provided by a subscriber;

a receiver configured to receive an e-mail message and to ascertain a first message characteristic of the received e-mail message, the first message characteristic being other than message sender ~~information~~ information, message subject line information, and message time information;

a comparator configured to compare the first message characteristics of the received e-mail messages with the stored list of message characteristics, to tag the e-mail message if there is a characteristic match, and to generate a message ID for the e-mail message if there is the characteristic match;

an alert mechanism configured to send an alert message to the subscriber to receipt of the e-mail message having the characteristic match, the alert message including the message ID; and

a save facility configured to store the e-mail message having the characteristic match for future distribution instructions, the future distribution instructions associated with the message ID and received from the subscriber in response to the alert message.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 13 further comprising a forwarding facility configured to retrieve and to forward the e-mail message having the characteristic match from the save facility to a destination provided by the subscriber in response to the alert message.

17. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises a human interface configured to perform one or more of the following: identify the e-mail message having the characteristic match to be retrieved, retrieve the identified e-mail message, and forward the identified e-mail message to the destination provided to an operator by the subscriber.

18. (Previously Presented) The agent of claim 16 wherein the forwarding facility comprises an automated telephone menu system configured to provide choices to the subscriber connecting to the forwarding facility by telephone to allow the subscriber calling in to identify the e-mail message to be forwarded, and the agent is configured to retrieve and forward the identified e-mail message to the destination provided by the subscriber calling in response to the alert message.

19. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

    receiving a message for a subscriber;

    comparing the message to first criteria, the first criteria other than message sender ~~information~~ information, message subject line information, and message time information;

if the message matches the first criteria, then generating a message ID and sending an alert including the message ID to the subscriber;

receiving a reply from the subscriber in response to the alert, the reply comprising instructions associated with the message ID; and

processing the message according to the instructions.

20. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19 wherein the message is an e-mail message.

21. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a notification message that identifies the received message and the first criteria matching the message.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the comparing step comprises filtering the message to determine if parts of the message meet the first criteria.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the first criteria are one or more of the following: message subject line information, message body information, and message attachment information, wherein the comparing step further comprises comparing the message to second criteria, the second criteria being message sender information, and wherein the generating and sending step further comprises if the message matches the second criteria, then generating the message ID and sending the alert including the message ID to the subscriber.

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24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert comprises at least a portion of the message.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a pager.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the alert is a message sent to a phone.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the instructions comprise a command to forward the message to a new destination.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 27 wherein the new destination is one or more of the following:

     an e-mail address;

     a fax number;

     a telephone number;

     a mobile device;

     a hand-held computer;

     a notebook computer;

     a server computer; and

     an Internet Service Provider.

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29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the reply is received via one or more of the following entities:

　　　　an operator;

　　　　a voice-response system;

　　　　a telephone call;

　　　　an auto attendant; and

　　　　a mobile device.

30. (Currently Amended) A system as in claim 1 wherein the first characteristic is at least one of ~~message subject line information,~~ message body ~~information,~~ information and message attachment information, and wherein the agent is further configured to compare a second characteristic of the e-mail messages received for the subscriber to the specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, the second characteristic being <u>at least one of message subject line information and</u> message sender information.

31. (Currently Amended) An e-mail server as in claim 5 wherein the first characteristic is at least one of ~~message subject line information,~~ message body ~~information,~~ information and message attachment information, and wherein the agent is further configured to compare a second characteristic of the e-mail messages received for the subscriber to the specific message characteristics provided by the subscriber and pre-stored on the server, the second characteristic being <u>at least one of message subject line information and</u> message sender information.

32. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 9, wherein the first characteristic is at least one of ~~message subject line information,~~ message body ~~information,~~ information and message attachment information, and further comprising comparing a second characteristic of the received e-mail message to the prerecorded characteristics provided by the subscriber, the second characteristic being <u>at least one of message subject line information and</u> message sender information.

33. (Currently Amended) A agent as in claim 13 wherein the first message characteristic is at least one of ~~message subject line information,~~ message body ~~information,~~ information and message attachment information, and wherein the receiver is further configured to ascertain a second message characteristic of the received e-mail message, the second message characteristic being <u>at least one of message subject line information and</u> message sender information.